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AUTHOR	Ward, Patricia A.; Franquiz, Maria E.
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ABSTRACT

Even Start family literacy is a comprehensive approach that focuses on the family unit, addressing language and literacy competence for children and adults through integrated educational activities. Four core program components build upon one another to support children's school success and literacy outcomes. The components are: (1) adult basic education, English language literacy, and GED preparation; (2) parent education about their children's language development, the importance of reading and story telling, and parental teaching strategies; (3) early childhood education to improve the language and emergent literacy skills of children aged birth to 8; and (4) parent and child "together time," during which parents play with their children and practice skills learned in the parent education component under the supervision of a staff member. The core components align with a strengths-oriented approach to family literacy that respects families' culture, language, and competencies. Even Start projects are required to form partnerships and collaborative agreements with school districts, other agencies, or community groups to avoid duplication of services and share resources. Steps in the process of building such working relationships are listed; home-based and center-based service delivery strategies are described; and practitioner strategies for improving migrant Even Start programs are discussed. (SV)

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CHAPTER 7

An Integrated Approach: Even Start Family Literacy Model for Migrant Families

BY PATRICIA A. WARD AND
MARÍA E. FRÁNQUIZ

Introduction

The complex multidimensional skills that enable an individual to read and write grow over the span of a person's life. Families can play a major role in the development of those skills, particularly through children's interactive language experiences in infancy, the quantity and quality of exposure to language in early childhood, and parents' attitudes toward formal or school-based literacy.[1]

The phenomenon of family literacy as an educational intervention is relatively new, dating to the 1970s, when researchers and practitioners began relating early literacy experiences to children's later

[1]Shirley B. Heath, *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Catherine E. Snow, "Families as Social Contexts for Literacy Development," in *The Development of Literacy through Social Interactions: New Directions for Child Development*, ed. Colette Daiute (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993); Guadalupe Valdés, *Con Respeto—Bridging the Distances Between Culturally Diverse Families and Schools: An Ethnographic Portrait* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and Norma González, *I Am My Language: Discourses of Women and Children in the Borderlands* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001).

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reading success. Researchers like Urie Bronfenbrenner identified the family and home environment as the most effective institution in a child's life for supporting enduring education outcomes.[2]

Latino migrant parents typically envision different outcomes for their children than do mainstream middle-class parents. As pointed out by various researchers, the cultural definition of *educación* for Puerto Rican and Mexican families is broader than its English language cognate. *Educación* connotes the development of all the family-related values that shape a child's character, including moral values, respect for self and others, discipline and good manners, and responsibility toward self and the community. Mainstream middle-class families, on the other hand, interpret education in terms of learning to read, reading to learn, acquiring academic literacies, and developing writing and mathematical problem-solving skills. Because of the fundamental differences in definitions, traditional education programs and institutions struggle to honor the integrity and role of the Latino family.[3]

Latino families' respect for and orientation toward others is a primary ingredient for being *bien educado*. The mainstream definition of *well educated* does not encompass interpersonal relationships, but the Even Start Family Literacy Program aims to bridge the gap between *educación* and education, particularly in terms of migrant families' goals for their children's literacy development. As Guadalupe Valdés suggests, family literacy efforts should consider the interplay of social inequalities, educational ideologies, educational structures, and interpersonal interactions. Rejecting these diverse influences predictably limits education outcomes for migrant children.[4]

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[2]Trevor H. Cairney, "Developing Partnerships with Families in Literacy Learning," in *Family Involvement in Literacy: Effective Partnerships in Education*, ed. Sheila Wolfendale and Keith Topping (London: Cassell, 1996); and Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Ecology of the Family as a Context for Human Development: Research Perspectives," *Developmental Psychology* 22, no. 6 (November 1986): 723-42.

[3]Nitza M. Hidalgo, *"I saw Puerto Rico once": A Review of the Literature on Puerto Rican Families and School Achievement in the United States*, report 12 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992) (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 355 029); Sonia Nieto, *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education*, 2d ed. (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1995); and Catherine E. Walsh, *Pedagogy and the Struggle for Voice: Issues of Language, Power, and Schooling for Puerto Ricans* (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1991).

[4]Valdés, *Con Respeto*.

Even Start Family Literacy Program

Even Start Family Literacy is a comprehensive approach that focuses on the family unit rather than on individual family members. It addresses language and literacy competence for children and adults through integrated educational activities. The basic premise is that adult basic education and literacy, parenting education, early childhood education, and parent and child "together time" constitute an integrated approach. The components build upon one another to support children's school success and enduring literacy outcomes. Practitioners communicate this integrated approach to migrant families, the majority of whom are of Mexican, Central American, Puerto Rican, or Haitian origin. Even Start takes advantage of migrant families' home resources, networks, and traditions, and recognizes children's *capacidad*, or capabilities.[5]

Brief History of Even Start

The U.S. Department of Education's Even Start Family Literacy Program is the major provider of family literacy services for migrant families. This comprehensive, intensive, integrated, and collaborative program was first authorized in 1989 as Title 1, Part B, of the Elementary and Secondary School Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988. In 1992, states assumed responsibility for administering most grants, but programs specifically for migrant families were supported through special set-aside funds and continued to be administered by the Office of Migrant Education. The Improving America's School Act of 1994 reauthorized Even Start for five years and strengthened provisions targeting services to families most in need. The Literacy Involves Families Together (LIFT) Act, approved in 2000, strengthened Even Start program accountability, expanded the ages at which children can be served, set standards for

[5]Patricia McKee and Nancy Rhett, "The Even Start Family Literacy Program," in *Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities*, ed. Lesley M. Morrow (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1995); and Barbara H. Wasik and Suzannah Herrmann, "Family Literacy Programs: Overview," in "Synthesis of Research on Family Literacy Programs," ed. Barbara H. Wasik for the U.S. Department of Education, 2001. A forthcoming publication (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004) will include the revised chapters from this report.

programs based on scientific research, encouraged coordination with other federal programs, and provided funds for training and technical assistance to local program instructors.

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act, which amended the ESEA and consolidated the discretionary Bilingual Education Program and the Emergency Immigrant Education Program into the new Title III State Formula Grant Program. As the latest incarnation of the ESEA, No Child Left Behind is expected to greatly expand the federal role in education. At a time of wide public concern about the state of education, the legislation sets in place requirements that reach into virtually every public school in the United States. For fiscal year 2002, Congress appropriated the largest dollar increase ever in federal education aid, including approximately $7 million for new Even Start awards. This should lead to an expansion of the 17 Even Start migrant projects currently operating in 15 states. Many more states likely will apply for funding to create new home, school, and center-based programs, as well as partnerships to address the needs of highly mobile families.

Core Components of the Even Start Family Literacy Program

The William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Act (ESEA Title I, Part B, Subpart 3) was designed specifically to address the effects of poverty and improve family literacy through the following services: early childhood education, adult basic education or English language instruction, and parenting education, which includes interactive literacy activities between parents and children. Projects may implement each component or collaborate with other agencies to provide some of the services. The Even Start program has the goals of (1) helping parents improve their English literacy or basic education skills, (2) helping parents become full partners in educating their children, and (3) assisting children in reaching their full potential as learners.

The Even Start Family Literacy Act delineates particular responsibilities for Migrant Education Even Start projects:

- identify, recruit, and ensure services to families most in need
- screen and prepare families for participation
- accommodate participants' work schedules

- design and implement strategies that ensure attendance and support success in achieving families' education goals
- operate year-round services
- provide high-quality intensive instruction
- incorporate preschool reading readiness activities
- promote continuity of family literacy to improve education outcomes
- train project staff in family literacy constructs
- provide adults and children with instruction grounded in scientifically based reading research
- ensure the majority of the academic staff is certified in the appropriate subject area
- conduct regular home-based services
- coordinate with services provided under Title I, Part A; Workplace Investment Act; Individuals with Disabilities Act; Adult Education and Literacy; Head Start; other local literacy councils; etc.
- conduct independent local evaluations

Many of these requirements pose challenges for organizations that serve migrant families, requiring project applicants to plan carefully in developing high-quality programs that provide intensive services no matter where migrant families may travel to live and work. In particular, many project applicants struggle to develop instructional strategies that build family literacy and reading skills in English as well as Spanish.

Service models can range from distance learning and computer-based instruction, to creative arts, to life-management skills. A project grantee can be a state education agency, school district, or faith-based or community-based organization. Often, the most challenging services to sustain systematically are instructional home visits scheduled around parents' work schedules. Home visits provide developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive early childhood education that builds early reading skills.

Adult Literacy

Adult literacy plays a central role in Even Start and typically includes high-caliber instructional services that advance adult literacy skills through adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), English as a second language (ESL), and preparation for the General Educational Development High School Equivalency Degree (GED). The intent is to strengthen parents' literacy skills, develop parents' understanding of the skills and knowledge needed to assist their children's academic success in U.S. schools, and possibly improve a family's economic standing. The assumption is that conveying the education values of mainstream middle-class America will enhance the confidence of migrant parents to support their children's education. Practitioners must approach program participants with respect rather than a deficit-oriented perspective. The philosophy is that mobile families are capable of moving into a new world without completely giving up the old. This also means families should have a voice in determining which project component they need most.

In a recent study, most adult Even Start participants cited learning English as the primary reason for enrolling in the program. In another study, parents identified the following goals: upgrading reading and math skills, earning a GED or an alternative high school diploma, developing employment interview skills, exploring career options, and improving skills to help children with homework.[6]

Learning new skills, whether basic education or English as a second language, requires a commitment to extensive hours in class and study time out of class. Evidence suggests that 80 to 100 hours of instruction are needed to gain one grade level on tests of adult skills.[7] Due to irregular class attendance and disrupted enrollment patterns, most adults are unable to obtain enough instruction in a year to achieve measurably. Disruptive factors for migrant adults include time constraints related to family, work, and household responsibilities; frequent and often unplanned moves; unreliable transportation; poor health; and inadequate resources for child care.

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[6]Judith Alamprese, "Understanding Adult Literacy in the Context of Family Literacy," in "Synthesis of Research"; and Meta W. Potts and Susan Paull, "A Comprehensive Approach to Family-Focused Services," in *Family Literacy*.

[7]Alamprese, "Understanding Adult Literacy."

One pervasive element in adult literacy that merits serious consideration is the language of instruction. Between 90 and 100 percent of the enrollees in migrant family literacy programs speak languages other than English. Adult education programs need to align program objectives with the goals of adult learners, who may be improving their conversational and functional English skills for various reasons, such as communicating with coworkers, handling health-care issues, or helping their children with homework. Adult learners' goals may also include improving reading comprehension and writing skills in their native language as well as English. To meet this goal, it may be necessary for practitioners to consider team-teaching approaches with monolingual and bilingual instructors. The range of learners' goals can be challenging because most adults in Even Start programs have limited formal education.

Parenting Education

The parenting education component is designed to help strengthen support of young children's literacy development and early success in U.S. schools through parenting classes, parent support groups, and home-based instruction.[8] Activities share information with parents about language development, emergent literacy strategies, and literacy-rich home environments, and provide hands-on practice sessions to apply information. Native language has been described as "the language of family, of food, of music, of ritual—in short, of identity."[9] Consequently, parenting education in English must not be encoded with negative images, connotations, or direct messages that denigrate the language and literacy practices of the home.

Even Start literacy programs help parents convey to their children the pleasure of reading. Parents learn about mainstream education processes, such as the teaching sequence of emergent reading and writing skills. Parents also learn how mainstream parents share culturally laden experiences with their children, including pretend play, nursery rhymes, storybooks, songs, library visits, trips, and letter activities. This conveys the importance of teaching children culturally

[8]Doug Powell, "Parenting Education in Family Literacy Programs," in "Synthesis of Research."

[9]González, *I Am My Language*, 50.

relevant oral literacy practices, such as *consejos*, proverbs, and prayers. In other words, enrichment activities found in mainstream homes are no more or less valuable than cultural narratives in Latino households. Research affirms that *consejos* used by migrant parents to instill morals, beliefs, and values often encourage children to do well in school and listen to teachers.[10]

Parents discover the importance of giving their children books to own and making time for reading and storytelling. Parents also learn teaching practices, such as structuring talk to help children display information or expand utterances. These strategies can promote subtractive or additive change to family interactions. Change in child-rearing practices is at the heart of Even Start Parenting Education. However, such change can produce positive or negative results, affirm or disaffirm the cultural values of mobile working-class parents, or create emotional equilibrium or disequilibrium in children's lives. This delicate balance rests in the hands of the practitioner, who can either respect or attack the native culture, language, and literacy practices present in every family.

One practitioner suggests the following to parents:

> Engage the children around you in conversation. For example, "Tell me about the house you drew." Help children expand their vocabularies. One easy way to do this is by talking about things you see during everyday activities. For example, "Look at all the vegetables at the store this morning. Let's see how many we can name."[11]

In this way, parents are helped to understand the mainstream discourse style that migrant children must master to succeed in school. The question is whether family practice of such discourse preferences across years of schooling will alter family relations negatively.

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[10]Concha Delgado-Gaitán, *Literacy for Empowerment: The Role of Parents in Children's Education* (New York: Falmer, 1990); Valdés, *Con Respeto*; and Peter Hannon, "School Is Too Late: Preschool Work with Parents," in *Family Involvement in Literacy*.

[11]*The Achiever*, No Child Left Behind Newsletter, 20 May 2002, http://www.nclb.gov/Newsletter/20020520.html/ (accessed March 24, 2003).

Early Childhood Education

Even Start provides developmentally appropriate educational activities to improve the language and emergent literacy skills of children from birth through age eight. Effective curricula focus on the strengths and interests of children; recognize children as contributors to their own development; and involve children in active learning that includes manipulation of materials, exploration, and discovery.

The goal of the early childhood component is to prepare migrant children for successful school entry and school achievement in the United States. Research indicates that preschool services can promote language development, emergent literacy, and later school success. Preschool children are better served by approaches that incorporate their native language, which, for most migrants, is Spanish. However, native language instruction has been curtailed in states that have passed laws such as Proposition 227 in California, Proposition 203 in Arizona, and Question 2 in Massachusetts. In light of these restrictive laws, the Even Start early childhood component has taken on added importance for migrant families.[12]

Learning the intricacies of a language requires children to be exposed to that language. As the first teachers, parents talk with children in interactive, conversational ways that convey the uses of language, as well as vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar. The quality of adult-child verbal exchanges in the home language relates directly to positive school-related outcomes. Parents who elicit daily conversations with their children contribute positively to language outcomes, including earlier talk and more talk.[13]

The emergence of literacy strategies is another important concern of Even Start early childhood education. This developmental approach views literacy as a continuum that proceeds from an infant's first experiences with print to conventional forms of reading and writing.[14] Emergent literacy encompasses all the building blocks of

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[12]Wasik and Herrmann, "Family Literacy Programs"; and Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin, eds., *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1998) (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 416 465).

[13]Snow, "Families as Social Contexts."

[14]Christopher J. Lonigan and Grover J. Whitehurst, "Getting Ready to Read: Emergent Literacy and Family Literacy," in "Synthesis of Research."

conventional reading, such as corresponding letters and sounds, recognizing word boundaries, using appropriate vocabulary in context, associating print with visual representation, etc. The homes of successful early readers often provide many contexts for using literacy, such as prayer, listening to stories, paraphrasing of stories, and communicating on paper. In literacy-rich homes, parents integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing into many aspects of family life. They model literate strategies in functional and pleasurable activities and make literacy materials available to their children. These principles guide Even Start practitioners in planning for parent education. To ensure that children have optimal opportunities to develop emergent literacy skills with their parents, Even Start Family Literacy projects provide structured time for parents and children to spend together.

Parent and Child Together Time

An essential part of the Even Start family literacy model is a regularly scheduled time when parents and children play together under the supervision of a staff member. Parent and Child Together Time offers parents an opportunity to practice skills acquired in the parenting education component. Parents observe their children, listen to and talk with them, and practice proven strategies to support literacy and language development. Informal interactive activities teach parents how to support their children's literacy development in relaxing and fun ways. Staff members study these interactions, which reveal general information regarding parents' knowledge about children, beliefs about parenting, and opinions about the literacy strategies valued by U.S. schools.[15]

Parents' continued support promotes children's reading development even when formal schooling begins. To succeed as partners in the education of their children, parents need to receive specific information about the school's expectations for reading development and how they can support their children. Opportunities for parents and teachers to exchange ideas help parents understand the school's approach to reading and help teachers understand how families use

[15]R. Hancock and S. Gale. *The 1991 PACT Survey.* London: PACT, 1992.

literacy at home and in their community. Parents are more likely to be involved in their children's schooling if they understand their role, feel confident in helping their children succeed, and believe their involvement at home and in school is valued.[16]

The core components of Even Start Family Literacy programs align with a strengths-oriented approach to family literacy. After all, the most important purpose for family literacy programs is to give families greater adaptive control over their lives and their futures. This requires service providers to respect the culture, language, and competencies within families. Programs should develop curricular material related to families' lives, goals, priorities, and beliefs. Program developers also should be sensitive to the ways parents and children share literacy in their daily routines. Storytelling, for example, is an important part of Latino culture and can be used to develop language skills and teach organization of stories.[17]

Integration of Services: Building Working Partnerships

Even Start programs are required to form partnerships and collaborative agreements with existing education, social service, community, and/or business groups in the delivery of services. The intent is to avoid duplication of services, reduce costs, share expertise, and create a range of services that is greater than the sum of its parts.[18] The challenge to partners and collaborators is to meld their diverse purposes, approaches, and issues into a seamless program that offers quality literacy education to enrolled families. To succeed, staff from partner agencies must become a team, meet regularly, discuss their observations and ideas, and merge them into integrated lessons.

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[16]Ibid.; Joyce L. Epstein, *Effects on Parents of Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement*, report 346 (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1983) (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 237 500); and Concha Delgado-Gaitán, "Involving Parents in the Schools: A Process of Empowerment," *American Journal of Education* 100, no. 1 (November 1991): 20-46.

[17]Lesley M. Morrow, ed., *Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities* (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1995) (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 383 995); and Alma F. Ada, "The Pajaro Valley Experience: Working with Spanish-Speaking Parents to Develop Children's Reading and Writing Skills in the Home Through the Use of Children's Literature," in *Minority Education: From Shame to Struggle*, ed. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Jim Cummins (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1988).

[18]McKee and Rhett, "Even Start Family Literacy Program."

Beginning the Process

Building working partnerships among agencies with different histories, expertise, and purposes takes time, trust, and respect. The Interstate Migrant Education Council has proposed a multistep process to establish working relationships:

1. Identify a potential partner.
2. Obtain a sense of compatibility. Are potential partners engaged in compatible kinds of work?
3. Determine mutual interests and potential risks for partners.
4. Validate the partner information and identify partner tasks and costs.
5. Negotiate the terms of the partnership and develop a written agreement.
6. Incorporate partners in the daily processes.
7. Evaluate the partnership. Evaluation should be ongoing and may direct the partners back to a previous step.[19]

Migrant Education Even Start programs are very complex and require partnerships among diverse agencies to integrate a multitude of educational services. As a result, staff must be carefully selected, monitored, and affirmed. Developing a comprehensive plan for continuous staff development and support is of immense importance. The plan should assist staff in working with professionals from different fields to reach culturally responsive goals regarding the course of second-language instruction. Staff must be knowledgeable of and experienced in each program component to communicate the principles and concepts to children and parents.

Technology also can be used among collaborative partners to help migrant families meet their literacy goals. Service providers can encourage families to participate in learning by using the Internet. Some studies point to the effectiveness of software in teaching second-language speech and phonological sensitivity skills to children. A variety of technology projects have been piloted with migrant

[19]Interstate Migrant Education Council, *Technology: Anytime, Anyplace, Any Pace Learning* (Washington, DC: Interstate Migrant Education Council, 2001).

families in Alaska, California, Kentucky, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Oregon, and other states. The potential benefits of computers include greater communication and employment possibilities, increased access to information that helps children complete homework assignments, and enhanced program coordination and effectiveness.[20]

Home-Based Delivery Strategies

Migrant family literacy projects employ at least two service delivery strategies: center based and home based. While some evidence points to better outcomes in center-based projects, Even Start projects are required to provide some integrated instructional services in the families' homes. Furthermore, home visit strategies may be the best or only way to serve some families in geographically isolated locations or where emotional, social, or physical fragility is a concern.[21]

Home visits have many positive attributes for both the family and family educator. Home visits enable family educators to gain important insights into the following aspects of family life:

- quality of the relationship among family members
- items in the home that contribute to the development of emergent literacy and that can serve as a base for additional literacy experiences
- physical space available to the family
- organizational and family management skills of the parents
- any physical or emotional distractions inherent in the home environment

Such insights make it possible for the family educator to present practical lessons that parents can carry out within the context of their unique living situation.

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[20]John Strucker, Catherine E. Snow, and Barbara A. Pan, "Family Literacy for ESOL Families: Challenges and Design Principles," in "Synthesis of Research"; and Barbara W. Wise and others, "Interactive Computer Support for Improving Phonological Skills," in *Word Recognition in Beginning Literacy*, ed. Jamie L. Metsala and Linnea C. Ehri (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998).

[21]Interstate Migrant Education Council, *Proceedings Report: Seminar on Family Literacy for Migrant Families* (Washington, DC: Interstate Migrant Education Council, 2000); and McKee and Rhett, "Even Start Family Literacy Program."

In the home-based model, educators teach families one at a time, individualizing literacy lessons in culturally meaningful ways. This approach motivates migrant parents who may have had negative experiences in prior learning situations. Of equal importance, the home-visit model can help parents understand the link between preschool literacy activities and later reading proficiency. While learning how home life can have a positive impact on their children's literacy development, parents also develop skills to help build partnerships with their children's teachers.[22]

Home visits should be more than an add-on to center-based activities, a drop-off for books or child development information, or a social visit. Effective home visits have (1) clear and realistic objectives, (2) a planned design for delivery of services, (3) well-trained and supervised family educators, and (4) systematic evaluations. Each visit must include a well-developed comprehensive lesson comprising all four core components in fully integrated lesson activities.

The Geneseo Migrant Center developed a particularly powerful series of lessons for its Mobile Migrant and Promesa Even Start projects. Each lesson is based on a children's book and includes early childhood, adult, and parenting education activities. The books selected are appropriate to children's developmental levels, relevant to migrant families, and available in Spanish and English. Lessons correlate to New York state learning standards and early childhood assessment tools. Each lesson includes helpful hints to family educators regarding the skills addressed by the language/literacy theme. Given the importance of parent support and involvement, such lessons provide an effective way to engage families in home visits.[23]

Migrant Families and Migrant Education Even Start

Among the most salient factors in predicting children's future academic success are the economic, educational, and social character-

[22]Patricia Ward, D. Horton, and M. L. Lougheed, *Migrant Home Literacy Program Manual* (Albany: New York State Migrant Education Program, 1993).

[23]Anne Salerno and Mary A. Fink, *Home/School Partnerships: Migrant Parent Involvement Report* (Geneseo, NY: Parental Resources for Involvement in Migrant Education, 1992) (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 345 915).

istics of the family.[24] Migrant families are among the most economically distressed, educationally challenged, and highly mobile populations in the United States. The frequent moves, low pay, and long work hours associated with the migrant lifestyle are compounded by insufficient health care, inadequate housing, poor nutrition, and interrupted schooling. Any one of these factors could hinder a child's chance for success in traditional education systems and family literacy programs. In spite of these hurdles, migrant parents value education as a path to a better life for themselves and their children.

The challenge to Migrant Education Even Start projects is to design family literacy programs that accommodate the unique attributes of the migrant lifestyle and address the particular literacy needs and learning styles of family members. Andrew Hayes emphasizes the all-inclusive change necessary to address the challenges of migrant families. He suggests that the mobile lifestyle and long work hours of migrant families are likely to preclude long-term or intensive participation in family literacy programs. Therefore, the literacy needs of such families will be served best through strategies that (1) help families achieve specific literacy skills that are additive and can serve as foundation blocks for the attainment of other skills, (2) are considered important by families and can reasonably be achieved within limited time constraints, (3) are important in and of themselves, and when achieved, will enhance the family's situation, and (4) are sustainable, and once developed, are not likely to need redevelopment at a later time.[25]

Program Development Strategies

Family literacy encompasses several education domains such as early childhood education, adult literacy, and second-language acquisition. The following strategies may be helpful to practitioners:

- read education literature to discover education trends

[24] Andrew E. Hayes, "Breaking the Cycle of Undereducation and Poverty: Comprehensive Family Literacy Programs in Migrant Education" (paper presented at the Interstate Migrant Education Council Seminar on Family Literacy on Migrant Families, Washington, DC, 2000).

[25] Ibid.

- listen to education and government leaders to determine which initiatives and programs are being funded
- create visibility for how family literacy can support those initiatives and strategize ways that family literacy can partner with those programs
- invest time and effort to develop effective, mutually beneficial partnerships
- advertise family literacy to potential partners as a critical support for student learning
- build into the program structures that will accommodate differences among agencies
- integrate services so components and practitioners are not isolated
- plan evaluation, technical assistance, and staff training activities to ensure the quality of family services

Implications: What Does All This Mean for Migrant Advocates?

The foundational principle of Even Start is that adult basic education and literacy, parenting education, early childhood education, and parent and child together time constitute the central components of an integrated approach. Each component can be optimized through collaborative partnerships among service agencies to guarantee child school success and enduring literacy outcomes. These opportunities can be nurtured through local projects that value family involvement activities while remaining sensitive to migrant families' mobile way of life.

Binational Migrant Even Start projects provide family literacy services for parents and children who follow nontraditional migration patterns of moving between countries rather than within or among states. These families return to Mexico each year for three to four months from home bases as far away as Pennsylvania or as close as Texas. In past years, family literacy services lapsed during the 12 to 16 weeks when families left their local service areas. Stronger ties between states such as Pennsylvania and Texas and the Mexican Department of Education have created a shared approach to family literacy. These partnerships promote the use of similar textbooks,

teacher exchanges, native-language literacy, reading readiness services, adult literacy models, and international credit transfers. Technology such as e-mail, the Internet, and televised instruction for adult education can now connect migrant families wherever they reside. A focus of migrant family literacy services should be to link families who work and live in two countries with a well-established service network. Clearly, multiple coordinated opportunities for education and training provide the best avenues for access and opportunity for migrant children and their families.

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